

Burgundian Crusader Ideology in Bertrandon de la Broquière's *Le Voyage d'Outremer*^{*}

Attila Bárány

University of Debrecen

Bertrandon de la Broquière (c. 1400–1459) was head carver, “premier écuyer tranchant et conseiller” of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy. His travels in 1432–1433 from Palestine through Asia Minor to the Balkans and Hungary were related in *Le Voyage d'Outremer* [d'Oultremer], probably composed between 1438 and the late 1450s,¹ though surviving manuscripts were made between 1455–1457.² The work was put into writing and illuminated by Jean Miélot, Duke Philip's most trusted scribe – probably in the mid-1450s, though he was in collaboration with La Broquière already in the 1440s.³

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¹ *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times. Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2013 (especially “The Diplomat Pilgrim Bertrandon de la Broquière”, p. 49–56), p. 49. John Tolan puts the date at 1455–1459. John Tolan, “Bertrandon de la Broquière”, In: *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, General Editor David Thomas, eds. David Thomas – Alex Mallett et al, Leiden, Brill, 2013, t. 3 (1350–1500), p. 443–446, here p. 444. Paviot argues for 1455–1457, most probably the latter. Jacques Paviot, *Les ducs de Bourgogne, la croisade et l'Orient (fin XIV^e siècle – XV^e siècle)*, Paris, Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2003, p. 149, 205. Vanderjagt dates it to 1457: Arie Johan Vanderjagt, “La Broquière, Bertrandon de (c. 1400–1459)”, In: *Trade, travel, and exploration in the Middle Ages: an encyclopedia*, eds. John Block Friedman – Kristen Mossler Figg, New York, Routledge, 2000, p. 325–326, here p. 326. Doutrepoint puts it to 1455: Georges Doutrepoint, *La littérature française à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne : Philippe le Hardi, Jean sans Peur, Philippe le Bon, Charles le Téméraire*, Paris, Champion, 1909 (Bibliothèque du XV^e siècle, 8), p. 259, 492; According to Deverbaux: 1458: Rima Deverbaux, “Reconstructing Byzantine Constantinople: intercession and illumination at the court of Philippe le Bon”, *French Studies*, 59, 2005, 3, p. 297–310, p. 298.

² Details: http://www.arlima.net/ad/bertrandon_de_la_broquiere.html , February 12, 2015

³ J. Vanderjagt, “La Broquière”, art. cit., p. 326. On Miélot see Georges Dogaer, *Flemish miniature*

Four extant manuscripts are known, all in Paris, *Bibliothèque nationale de France*. Three are held at the Département des Manuscrits, Division occidentale: MS Français 5593, fol 154–254;⁴ MS 5639, fol. 1–76;⁵ and MS 9087 [Supplément français 3205], fol. 1–252. MS Français 9087 is an illuminated codex, probably from a Lille hand and workshop, from the third quarter of the 15th century.⁶ The fourth is held at *Bibliothèque de l'arsenal*, Manuscrits français 4798 [676 H. F (ancienne cote)], fol. 153–258.⁷

For this paper, I have used Charles Schefer's edition of the work, although there are several 19th century editions, including a more recent one by Jacques Paviot.⁸ Broquière's work has been widely discussed more recently,

painting in the 15th and 16th centuries, Amsterdam, B. M. Israel, 1987, p. 87ff. Adrian Wilson – Joyce Lancaster Wilson, *A Medieval Mirror*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984, p. 50, 51, 55, 60, 61, 66, 70, 73, 74, 77, 79, 83.

⁴ *Recueil sur la Terre sainte. Cy commence le voyage de Bertrandon de la Broquière, que il fist en la terre d'outremer, l'an mil IIII^c XXXII*, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9007360s>, February 12, 2015.

⁵ *Recueil d'ouvrages sur l'Orient. Voyage d'outre-mer de Bertrandon de la Broquière (1432–1433)*, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90073705>, February 12, 2015.

⁶ *Voyage de Bertrandon de la Broquière, qu'il fist en la terre d'outre mer, l'an de grâce 1432. Advis directif pour faire le passage d'outre mer*, composé en 1332 par le dominicain Brocard l'Allemand, traduit en français, en 1455, par l'ordre de Philippe le Bon, duc de Bourgogne, par Jean Miélot, chanoine de Lille. <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8449038d>, February 12, 2015; Images: <http://mandragore.bnf.fr/>, February 12, 2015.

⁷ *Recueil concernant l'histoire d'Orient. Cy commence le Voiage Bertrandon de la Broquiere, que il fist en la terre d'outremer l'an mil CCCC XXXII*. <http://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ead.html?id=FRBNFEAD000085071>, February 12, 2015.

⁸ "Voyage d'outre-mer et retour de Jérusalem en France par la voie de terre pendant les années 1432 et 1433 par Bertrandon de la Brocquière... Ouvrage extrait d'un manuscrit de la Bibliothèque nationale, remis en français moderne", In: ed. Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Legrand d'Aussy, *Mémoires de l'Institut national des Sciences et Arts. Mémoires de morale et politique*, 5, 1804, p. 462–469, 469–637; *Le Voyage d'Outremer de Bertrandon de la Broquière premier écuyer tranchant et conseiller de Philippe le Bon, duc de Bourgogne (1432–1433)*, In: éd. Charles Schefer, *Recueil de voyages et de documents pour servir à l'histoire de la géographie depuis le XIII^e siècle jusqu'à la fin du XVI^e siècle*, t. 12, Paris, Ernest Leroux, 1892; *The Travels of Bertrandon de La Brocquiere, Counsellor and First Esquire-Carver to Philippe le Bon, Duke of Burgundy, to Palestine and his Return from Jerusalem Overland to France During the Years 1432 and 1433*, trad. Thomas Johnes, Hafod (Wales), James Henderson, 1807; Bertrandon de la Broquière, *The Voyage d'Outremer*, trad. Galen R. Kline, (*American University Studies*, 2nd Series: Romance Languages and Literature, 83), New York, Lang 1988; Bertrandon de la Broquière, *Voyage d'Orient. Espion en Turquie*, introduction et notes de Jacques Paviot, mis en français moderne par Hélène Basso, Toulouse, Anacharsis (Famagouste), 2010; A PhD-dissertation involved a new critical edition: Sylvia Cappellini,

largely in crusading and pilgrimage studies.⁹ Most modern commentators agree that La Broquière was charged with an “intelligence” mission, and that the overland route was deliberately chosen by Duke Philip the Good, as in this way he hoped to get invaluable information to support his schemes for a crusade against the Ottomans.¹⁰ Even the author makes it clear at the beginning of his piece that he is writing it “by command and order of my most respected lord, Philip”.

La Broquière's *Voyage* cannot be seen as only a “guide-book” for travellers to the Holy Land.¹¹ Neither was he merely a “spy” sent out to get information in military matters.¹² Some scholars do not even agree that he was a spy at all, but characterize his mission more moderately as a “fact-finding” one,

The Voyage d'Oultre Mer by Bertrandon de la Broquiere (1432-1433): An Enlightened Journey in the World of the Levant (Followed by a New Critical Edition of this Text), Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University, 1999.

⁹ J. Paviot, “D'un ennemi l'autre : des Mamelouks aux Ottomans. Voyages de renseignements au Levant (xiii^e-xvii^e siècle)”, In: *D'un Orient l'autre. Les métamorphoses successives des perceptions et connaissances*, 2. t, éd. Jean Claude Vatin, Paris, CNRS, 1991, t. 1, p. 317-328; J. Vanderjagt, “La Broquière”, art. cit.; Monica Barsi, “Constantinople à la cour de Philippe de Bon (1419-1467). Compte rendus et documents historiques. Avec l'édition du manuscrit B.n.F. fonds français 2691 du récit de Jacopo Tedaldi”, In: *Sauver Byzance de la barbarie du Monde*, Gargnano del Garda (14-17 maggio 2003) a cura di Liana Nissim e Silvia Riva, Milano, Cisalpino, 2004, p. 131-195; Jaroslav Svátek, “La vision de la croisade dans le récit de Bertrandon de la Broquière”, In: *Histoires et mémoires des croisades à la fin du Moyen Âge*, sous la direction de Martin Nejedlý et de Jaroslav Svátek, avec la collaboration de Daniel Baloup et Benoît Joudiou, Toulouse, FRAMESPA, 2012 (Méridiennes, Série Croisades tardives, 3), p. 143-160; Alain Julien-Surdel, “Oultremer. La Terre Sainte et l'Orient vus par des pèlerins du xv^e siècle”, In: *Images et signes de l'Orient dans l'Occident médiéval*, Aix-en-Provence, Publications du CUER-MA, 1982, p. 323-339.

¹⁰ A. Classen, “The Diplomat Pilgrim Bertrandon de la Broquière”, In: *op. cit.*, p. 49.

¹¹ “little booklet”: J. Vanderjagt, “La Broquière”, art. cit., p. 325; or even, “journal”: Idem, “Qui desirient veoir de monde ?” (“Bourgonniers en de Orient”), In: *De oriënt, droom of dreiging?: het Oosten in Westers perspectief*, eds. Hans Teye Bakker – Martin Gosman, Kampen, Kok Agora, 1988, p. 18-37, here p. 31; or, “un journal d'impressions”: G. Doutrepoint, *La littérature française à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne*, *op. cit.*, p. 247; Martin Nejedlý is on the opinion that the *Voyage* was not intended as a mere handbook for future crusaders and pilgrims: Martin Nejedlý, “Paměti o varanovi ‘mnoukajícím víc než kocka’ a o rubínu svatováclavské koruny, ‘velikém jako zralá datle’”. *Zved Bertrandon de la Broquière na cestách (sebe)poznání*, *Studia Mediaevalia Bohemica*, 2, 2010, p. 39-73.

¹² Opinions on his being a spy: A. Classen, “The Diplomat Pilgrim Bertrandon de la Broquière”, In: *op. cit.*, p. 50; Jacques Paviot also names him a “l'espion bourguignon”: J. Paviot, *Les ducs de Bourgogne*, *op. cit.*, p. 77, 247. Furthermore, he denotes him as “espion de Turquie” in the edition of his.

through which he was to make “rapports”.¹³ Some even hold the opinion that the traveller was “encouraged and rewarded” by the Duke, but not in fact ordered.¹⁴ Upon introducing his work, the author does say that he is hoping to assist those Christian princes who “wish to undertake the conquest of Jerusalem by taking a large army overland”, and “should any noblemen want to go or come by land, he can learn of the cities, towns, regions, countries [...] and topography along the route”.¹⁵ He is thus making a blueprint for a great, *overland* crusade, through the Ottoman territories of Europe. It is to be emphasized that the overland route was to be thoroughly examined, as very little of it had survived in living memory.¹⁶ The itinerary of the *Voyage* was to follow one of the routes of the First Crusade.¹⁷ However, my view is that Bertrandon’s narratives – not only on Palestine, but all the territories held by Ottomans – are of a much more conscious “programming” agenda deliberately designed to arouse the Prince’s, Philip the Good’s interest in the *negotium Christi*. It had long been known at that time that Duke Philip was preoccupied with the recapture of Jerusalem and captivated by the Orient in his political ideology.¹⁸ But simply committing to a crusade is one thing.

¹³ J. Vanderjagt, “La Broquière”, art. cit., p. 325; Idem, “Qui desirent veoir de monde”, In : *op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹⁴ Richard Vaughn, *Philip the Good. The Apogee of Burgundy*, (New Edn) Woodbridge, Boydell, 2002, p. 270.

¹⁵ “[...] par commandement et ordonnance de treshault, trespuissant et mon redoubté seigneur, [...] ay faict mectre en escript ce pou de voyage que j’ay faict; affin que si aucun roy ou prince crestien vouloit entreprendre la conquete de Iherusalem et y mener grosse armée par terre, ou aulcun noble homme y vouldist aller ou revenir, qu’il peust sçavoir les villes cités, régions, contrées, rivières, montaignes, passaiges es pays et les seigneurs qui les dominent, depuis Iherusalem jusques à la duchié de Bourgoigne.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 1-2. See J. Paviot, *Les ducs de Bourgogne*, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

¹⁶ J. Vanderjagt, “La Broquière”, art. cit., p. 325.

¹⁷ J. Paviot, “Burgundy and the Crusade”, In: *Crusading in the Fifteenth century*, ed. Norman Housley, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 71.

¹⁸ J. Vanderjagt, “La Broquière”, art. cit., p. 325; G. Doutrepoint, *La littérature française à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne*, *op. cit.*, p. 512; Judith Guéret-Laferté, “Le livre et la croisade”, In: *Le banquet du faisan, occident face au défi de l’Empire ottoman*, Actes du colloque, Lille et Université d’Artois, éd. Marie-Thérèse Caron – Denis Clauzel, Arras, Artois Presses de l’Université, 1997, p. 107-114, here p. 108; Jean Richard, “La Bourgogne des Valois, l’idée de croisade et la défense de l’Europe”, In: *Le banquet de faisan...*, *op. cit.*, p. 15-27; Jean Devaux, “Le Saint Voyage de Turquie : croisade et propagande à la cour de Philippe le Bon (1463-1464)”, In: « À l’heure encore de mon écrire ». *Aspects de la littérature de Bourgogne sous Philippe le Bon et Charles le Téméraire*, Études rassemblées et présentées par Claude Thiry, Louvain-la-Neuve, Université catholique, 1997, p. 53-70; Constantin Marinescu,

Actually arranging for a navy and embarking for war, not to mention leading a campaign in person, is another thing altogether. Thus, I would attribute an ulterior motive to the author, a kind of second underlying thought. He has been described as “having intellectual curiosity unusual in a Pre-Renaissance traveller”,¹⁹ and I would suggest the reason is that the author is trying to solicit the Duke of Burgundy – if not to embark on a crusade *himself* – but to realize his own designs to become the most illustrious Christian ruler on earth, and make preparations for a crusading host to relieve – or, to *re-capture* (as the text itself was most probably compiled after 1453) Constantinople. The miniature of the fallen Constantinople points to the recovery of the city through the crusade projects of Burgundy.²⁰ The Duke had already shown a sign of commitment: in 1429 he sent relief to Rhodes against the Mamluks.²¹ In a way, this work is a veiled invocation for the Duke of Burgundy to take up the *causa fidei* and have Burgundy involved as much as possible in the crusading effort. The miniature of the departure of a crusade might have also had a similar effect.²² As the work is presented to the Duke, the task of the crusade is, in effect, assigned to him.

The author was a close confidant of the Duke and carried out diplomatic missions to France.²³ He performed military duties for Burgundy, having responsibility for several fortresses (e.g. the castellanship of Vieil-Chastel in 1428, and the captaincy of important strongholds in Flanders: Gouda, Neufport, Rupelmonde and Oostdunes).²⁴ It was the Duke himself that arranged for his marriage to an heiress, Catherine de Bernieulles.²⁵ As a member of the

“Philippe le Bon, duc de Bourgogne, et la croisade (1419-1453)”, In: *Actes du VI^e Congrès international d'études byzantines*, Paris, Institut d'art et d'archéologie, 1950, p. 149-168; Yvon Lacaze, “Politique «méditerranéenne» et projets de croisade chez Philippe le Bon : de la chute de Byzance à la victoire chrétienne de Belgrade, mai 1453-juillet 1456”, *Annales de Bourgogne*, 41, 1969, p. 5-42, 81-132.

¹⁹ J. Vanderjagt, “La Broquière”, art. cit., p. 326.

²⁰ R. Deverbaux, “Reconstructing Byzantine Constantinople”, art. cit., p. 304-308. See Maria Colombo Timelli, “Cherchez la ville. Constantinople à la cour de Philippe le Bon (1419-1467)”, In: *Sauver Byzance de la barbarie du Monde*, op. cit., p. 113-130.

²¹ J. Paviot, “Burgundy and the Crusade”, art. cit., p. 71.

²² Français 9087, fol. 9r. Départ pour la Croisade.

²³ J. Tolan, “Bertrandon de la Broquière”, art. cit., p. 443.

²⁴ Auguste Molinier, *Les sources de l'histoire de France des origines aux guerres d'Italie (1494)*, Paris, Picard, 1901-1906, 6 t. here t. 4, p. 237-238.

²⁵ J. Vanderjagt, “La Broquière”, art. cit., p. 326; G. Doutrepoint, *La littérature française à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne*, op. cit., p. 247.

ducal household (*"membre de l'hôtel"*), La Broquière was in close amity with the Duke, and in a position to know very well what he had in mind. He was well aware how he could flatter the Prince's chivalrous vanity, and for what schemes he could be "bought". The Duke's resolve on behalf of the *negotium Christi* and his knightly desire to become the first and foremost Christian ruler was well known in the early 15th century.²⁶ Beyond acting as a "pilgrim", La Broquière was also to learn of the military machinery of the Ottomans and the situation of Christianity in the East, but he himself was doing much more than that; he was acting on his own and was trying to confirm the commitment of his Prince to the cause of the Faith, exhort him to the *negotium* and spur his knightly sentiments.

The work itself, in my view, has two levels of interpretation. On the first, "practical" level, it is an ordinary programme-giving writing, providing a blue-print of a crusading scheme, serving the political pragmatism of the Burgundian state.²⁷ The crusade against the Ottomans was a major means for the Prince of Burgundy to become the legitimate champion of the Catholic church, overwhelming its rival House of Valois. Philip the Good wished to be elevated to the position of the sole *defensor ecclesiae*, a real *bellator* ruler, the greatest of all *milites Christi*. That is why the first, "overt" level is to supply information on the ways and methods of a possible *passagium generale* against the Ottomans in the Balkans in the style of the 1396 Nicopolis campaign, where the flower of Burgundian chivalry, under the banner of the Duke's father, John the Fearless, fought the Heathen. Thus, the ordinary level of the text is concerned with practical information on armies, garrison numbers, logistics, supply, fleets, artillery, fortresses etc.

There is a secondary – though I would not say subsidiary – "covert" level, where La Broquière makes veiled hints and allusions to the Prince. He alludes to his knightly ambition and Christian eagerness. He implies what the Prince would do as a true crusader ruler; he advises on the ways to become the only saviour of the Faith – beyond the actual crusading designs. That is, even if the Prince would not advance against the Turks himself, there might still be means to occupy the position of defender of the church: by getting hold of precious relics, strengthening the links of the house of Burgundy with the heroic past and with Godfrey de Bouillon, their "ancestor" on their lands in the Low

²⁶ Norman Housley, *The Later Crusades, 1274-1580: From Lyons to Alcazar*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 92.

²⁷ He brought "un bon nombre d'informations pratiques": M. Barsi, "Constantinople à la cour de Philippe de Bon", art. cit., p. 136.

Countries (which might just as well serve their interests of re-capturing their legitimate inheritance in Brabant and Lorraine),²⁸ as well as several “secondary” possibilities to gain glory on a “partial” campaign. It is implied that it is not necessary for Duke Philip himself to go as far as Constantinople to fight the Turks on his own, but it would be “enough” to strengthen Belgrade, or contribute to the upkeep of the Danube strongholds, or even to simply move towards Alexander the Great’s castle, and recover a relic of the ancient past. The work is full of implications with which the author wishes to attract the Duke towards the field of this “secondary” crusading commitment. The Duke could *also* be a true crusader and the champion of the church if he recovered Polydore’s tomb, or the equestrian statue attributed to Constantine the Great, or even if he sent a mission to Palestine to get hold of – and in this way “save” – the invaluable relics of Christianity. In this “programme”, the Prince could bring glory on himself if he could simply obtain the relics of the Virgin or St. George from the hands of the Ottomans, without ever even leaving his homeland of Burgundy. La Broquière is already well enough aware in the early 1430s of the fact that the Duke himself would most likely not undertake a great campaign in the Balkans to set the territories free from Ottoman occupation, but he tries to suggest *other* means as to how the Prince might become the guardian of Christ. For example, he might commission his followers to travel to Constantinople and the Holy Land and “recover” or – God forbid – purchase important relics. If the Prince were to assist the struggle against the Ottomans with monetary aid, the Byzantines, the Bulgarians or the Christians in the Holy Land would surely give some present in return. This would very much fit into the series of the Burgundian crusading schemes that never actually set out – the Feast of the Pheasant, for instance – not to mention the hundreds of knights of the Order of the Golden Fleece who never did in fact take up arms against the Ottomans. In a way, La Broquière’s work very well suits this peculiar Burgundian crusading ideology, though the author does his best to find ways and propose all kinds of means to arouse the interest of his Prince.

The fact that La Broquière made every effort to get the Duke acquainted in detail with the faith of Islam, and the doctrines of Muhammad, may be seen as part of a conscious scheme to ultimately get the Duke much more involved in the *negotium Dei*. He is not satisfied giving second-hand accounts.²⁹ As he himself

²⁸ *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 119, M. Barsi, “Constantinople à la cour de Philippe de Bon”, art. cit., p. 140.

²⁹ J. Vanderjagt, “La Broquière”, art. cit., p. 326.

states “as I was incessantly hearing Muhammad spoken of, I wished to know something about him”, for this purpose, “I addressed myself to a priest in Damascus, I asked him if he were acquainted with the doctrines of Mohammed. He said he was, and knew all the *Alcoran*”. He wished to get a Latin translation and a copy of the Quran, and managed to ask a Venetian canon in Damascus “to put down in writing all he knew of him”, so that he “might present it” to the duke of Burgundy.³⁰ (It is documented that the Duke did in fact have a Latin translation and a *Gesta Mahometi* as well.³¹) La Broquière’s self-reliant “scientific” program went very well; he was able to bring a Latin copy of the Quran and present it to the Duke as soon as he set foot in Burgundy.³² An illumination describes how he presents the book at the siege of Mussy l’Évêque [sur Seine].³³ The Duke showed interest, as “he had these books delivered to Jean Germain”, a theologian, “to examine”. Germain, the Chancellor of the Order of the Golden Fleece and a theoretician of the crusade seemed to be the right person to assign this task to.³⁴ Nevertheless, the author sadly concedes “that I have never heard one word concerning them since that time”.³⁵

“*Passagium generale*”: Practical crusading schemes

On a practical level, the work serves well as a blueprint for a great crusade. It supplies valuable information from a strategic and military perspective,

³⁰ “Et pour ce que on parloit tant de choses du fait de Machommet, je parlay à ung prestre qui servoit le consul des Venissiens à Damas lequel disoit souvent messe à l’ostel dudit consul et confessoit et ordonnoit lesditz marchans en leurs nécessitez ; auquel aussy je me confessay et ordonnay et luy demanday s’il savoit à parler dudit Machommet. Il me dit que oyl et qu’il savoit bien tout leur Alkoran. Je luy priay bien chierement que ce qu’il en savoit qu’il me le volsist baillier par escript et que je le porteroie à monseigneur le duc. Il le fist tresvoulentiers et ainsy je l’apportay avec moy.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 58.

³¹ J. Paviot, *Les ducs de Bourgogne*, op. cit., p. 76, 120, 227; R. Vaughn, *Philip the Good*, op. cit., p. 270; G. Doutrepoint, *La littérature française à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne*, op. cit., p. 250.

³² “Et là, treuvay [...] mondit seigneur le duc [...] ensamble l’Alkoran et les fais de Mahomet que le chappellain du consul des Venissiens à Damas m’avoit baillés par escript en latin, qui contenoit beaucoup d’escripture [...]”, *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 260-261.

³³ BnF Français 9087, f. 152v; See J. Paviot, *Les ducs de Bourgogne*, op. cit., p. 78; J. Guéret-Laferté, “Le livre et la croisade”, art. cit., p. 109; See Jean Murard, “Philippe le Bon et Bertrandon de la Broquière au camp de Mussy-l’Evesque en 1433”, *Mémoires de la Société Académique du Département de l’Aube*, 129, 2005, p. 297-308.

³⁴ J. Paviot, “Burgundy and the Crusade”, art. cit., p. 71; G. Doutrepoint, *La littérature française à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne*, op. cit., p. 249.

³⁵ “[...] lequel mondit seigneur bailla à maistre Jehan Germain, docteur en théologie, pour le visiter et oncques puis je ne le vey.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 261.

ranging from adequate harbours around the Balkan Peninsula and ferries along the major rivers, through castles and strategic points not yet taken, to marshes and impenetrable forests, possibly serving as a defensive perimeter, and towns and cities that might be used as bases for logistics and supplies.³⁶ On this level the work also gives a precise description of the Ottoman military machinery, character of recruitment, army numbers and structures, and the geographical distribution of different forces. It gives an analysis of the Ottoman military obligations, discipline, captaincy, intelligence, payment of both regular and irregular troops, the equipment of infantry and cavalry, artillery etc. In this way the work serves the Duke of Burgundy as a handbook for a crusading enterprise, a well designed piece of tactical writing. Nevertheless, it is much more than that: it is present everywhere that the author has a clear-cut intention to envision a program for his Prince for a *passagium generale* and to provide justification as to why Duke Philip should be the one to lead the crusade.

Most of the practicalities touch on the relationship between Balkan Christians and the Turks. La Broquière takes every chance to report on Christian slaves and "the shocking hardships they suffer". He describes that there are a "a great number of Christians, who serve through force, Greeks, Bulgarians, Macedonians, Albanians, Sclavonians, Wallachians, Servians", all of whom detest the Turk, because "he holds them in a severe captivity".³⁷ At Adrianople he speaks "with a bleeding heart" of "numbers of Christians chained, who were brought there for sale" and "begged for alms in the street".³⁸ He is trying to address the Duke's fraternal affection, showing how he was to be assigned the role of the saviour of Christians under Ottoman yoke. The author reports of a "beautiful woman, one of Hungarian nobility", who was carried off in a Turkish invasion, "whose situation inspired" him with pity. She was robbed away "by a Hungarian renegade", which calls the Prince's attention to the fact that if he was late with the enterprise, more and more Christians would succumb to Islam. Nevertheless, the resoluteness of the woman in the harem, the fact that she "had not yet renounced

³⁶ M. Barsi, "Constantinople à la cour de Philippe de Bon", art. cit., p. 137.

³⁷ "[...] y a aussi [...] beaucoup de Crestiens qui par force servent le Turc comme Grecz, Vulgaires, Macédoniens, Albanois, Esclavons, Rasciens et de Servie subjectz au dispot de Rascie et Wallaques, lesquelz, [...] car il les tient en grant servitude." *Le Voyage d'Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 224.

³⁸ "Je veys mener des Crestiens enchaînez vendre, et demandoient l'aumosne avant la ville, qui est grant pitié à veoir les maux qu'ilz portent." *Le Voyage d'Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 199.

her religion” also indicates that there is still strength in Christians and they would not easily yield if assisted by Western knights. La Broquière reminds the Duke of Burgundy that there is still a chance to recover the Balkans from the hands of the Heathen; Christian religion is still firm and the faithful still await the coming of the crusaders. The outcry of the Hungarian woman rouses the Prince to stand up and fulfil his divinely assigned role. The Christians in the Balkans are “melting into tears” and begging him to set out to save their souls.³⁹ La Broquière also provides information on subsequent Turkish forays into Hungary. He even saw with his own eyes “some Turks return from an excursion to Hungary”, and was informed by a Genoese that marauding troops were crossing the Danube and returning – it seems, in an almost regular fashion – to Turkish territory.⁴⁰

With the Balkans divided, the Slavs double-dealing, the Byzantines unreliable and the forces of Hungary’s King Sigismund unsatisfactory, La Broquière comes to the conclusion that the only prince who is able to come forward with aid and assume the role of leader of the crusade is the Duke of Burgundy. He appeals effectively to the Duke’s sense of knightly esteem and Christian righteousness. “The monarch who should form such a project ought at first to propose to himself for his object, not glory and renown, but God, religion, and the salvation of so many souls that are in the road to perdition.”⁴¹ Duke Philip would by no means do it for vainglory, but only for Christendom. If the Slavs “should see the Christians march in force against him, and *above all the French*, I have not the smallest doubt but they would turn against” the Turk and do him great mischief.⁴² The Duke has the diligence and capacity to act as a military commander: he has the virtue of war. The new general needs

³⁹ “[...] en celle ville où je veys une grant pitié d’une tresbelle gentille femme du royaulme de Honguerie laquelle ung Hongre renié de bas estât avoit gaignée en une course en Honguerie et la tenoit comme sa femme. Et quant elle nous vist, elle se print à plourer moult piteusement, et n’avoit point encoires renié nostre foy.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 206.

⁴⁰ “Je veis des Turcz qui venoient défaire une course en Honguerie. [...] je veis ung Jennevois [...] lequel les vit revenir quant ilz passèrent la Dunoe.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 202.

⁴¹ “Il me samble que si ung prince crestien se vouloit mettre sus, il faudroit premièrement disposer que la conquete qu’il voudroit faire seroit en l’honneur et révérence de Dieu et pourroit tant de ames qui sont en voye de perdition mettre en voye de salut, et non pas pour la loenge ne pour la vaine gloire de ce monde ; et devroit querir gens de congnoissance et de bonne volenté et qu’ilz ne feussent point pilleurs.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 225.

⁴² “[...] s’ilz veoyent les Crestiens et par especial les François en grant puissance contre le Turc, ce seroient ceulx qui luy porteroient plus de dommaige et luy tourneroient le dos.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 224.

to be “well-obeyed by his troops”, and know the way the Ottomans wage war, or at least, he should “particularly listen to the advice of those acquainted with” the Ottoman mode of warfare.⁴³ The author comes forward with a stern admonition: the new general’s forces must have strict discipline, as opposed to the amalgamated hosts led by King Sigismund, whose failing at Nicopolis was that he was ignorant of Turkish warfare tactics.⁴⁴ Conversely, the Duke has the capabilities – particularly being now in possession of all strategically relevant information as supplied by the author – to attempt the conquest of the Ottoman territories in Europe, or even penetrate further.⁴⁵ As a leader of the much feared Burgundian armies, he has the valour to collect from fifteen to twenty thousand archers, with whom they shall advance without difficulty from Belgrade to Constantinople. It may be possible to defeat the Turks on the battlefield, and liberate the territories they have subjugated.⁴⁶ The Turks are not so terribly formidable, and Bertrandon himself is of the opinion that “I do not think that for a well-disciplined people, it would be very hard to break and defeat them given their lack of arms.”⁴⁷ In other words, the well-disciplined ranks of Burgundian knighthood would unquestionably have an advantage over the Turkish military. I myself find this latter remark too self-assured, though not conceited or vainglorious as some scholars feel. Albrecht Classen regards this “as disingenuous, misleading his audience either out of naïveté or arrogance, and certainly not taking into full account the actual political and military situation in the Ottoman Empire”.⁴⁸ In my view this very much fits into the scheme La Broquière’ was trying to hatch as he was making great efforts to solicit the Prince, for which he was bound to over-exaggerate the military grandeur of Burgundy and underrate that of the Turks. He was of course aware (and, as he justifies it several times throughout the text, one feels he is

⁴³ “[...] mais qu’il y eust ung prince bien obey et qu’il vouldist faire par le conseil de ceulx qui connoissent leur manière de faire.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 225.

⁴⁴ “Car en m’a dit que derrainement qu’ilz combatoient l’empereur Sigemond, s’il eust voulu croire, il ne luy estoit nul besoin de abandonner sa place.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 225.

⁴⁵ “[...] après aucun prince ou autre avoit volenté d’entreprendre la conquête de la Grèce, et aler plus avant se mestier estoit.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 225.

⁴⁶ “Et pour ce qu’ilz ont eu autrefois de grans victoires sur les Crestiens, les manières qu’il faudroit tenir pour les rompre et deffaire en bataille, et avec ques quelles gens, et gaignier leurs seigneuries.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 216-217.

⁴⁷ “[...] il ne seroit point chose forte ne difficile à les romper et desconfire veu qu’ilz vont desarmez.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 224

⁴⁸ A. Classen, “The Diplomat Pilgrim Bertrandon de la Broquière”, In: *op. cit.*, p. 50.

even fascinated with the exquisite war organization of the Ottomans) that one could not claim that the Turks really had a “lack of arms”. He might have used this term to mean that they lacked the sophisticated, “high class” weaponry of the flower of the French chivalry. In knightly combat, in the French type of cavalry charge, the Burgundians would have prevailed and not the Turks.

La Broquière gives an especially detailed analysis of the military situation of Belgrade, of which he is a sharp observer.⁴⁹ One is led to believe that he would have the castle play a critical role in an overland crusade. Though it has its weaknesses, Belgrade can be relied upon as a strong shield of the Christian defensive belt that can hold up without reinforcements. Belgrade has “five forts, three on an elevated ground”, and “two on the river”. It can be built upon, since it has a “harbour that may hold from fifteen to twenty galleys, defended by towers”, and it is “closed up by a chain from one tower to the other”. The fortress “can contain from five to six thousand horses”. The castle is formidable both by its geography and by design, having ditches en glacis and a double wall, well kept and in repair that follows exactly the rise and fall of the ground. All five towers are well furnished with artillery, including huge brass cannons, one of which is of such size the author himself has never seen before, even in France.⁵⁰ In contrast to Belgrade, Galambóc/Golubac in its present state cannot be built upon in a campaign, since, although it is a strong castle, it can easily be attacked with artillery and all succour may be cut off from it. However, even in Belgrade the author did not see “more than six galleys and five galliots”, that is, he saw that further help would be needed, since he was informed that the Sultan kept “a hundred light galleys” along the Danube “to pass over Hungary at his pleasure”.⁵¹

⁴⁹ J. Tolan, “Bertrandon de la Broquière”, art. cit., p. 444.

⁵⁰ “Cette dite place est tresbelle et forte et est partie en V forteresses. Les trois en ce hault que j’ay dit et les deux sur la riyvere en la subgection de celles d’en hault et l’une des deux d’en bas est fortifiée contre l’autre, en laquelle a ung petit havre pour mettre XV ou XX galées pour la garde de deux tours où il y a une chaîne de l’une à l’autre, ainsi que on m’a dit car la riyvere estoit si grande que n’ay peu veoir ladite chaîne. Geste dite place est tresforte de trèsbeaux fossés tous glacissez et à double muraille, tresbelle et bien tourée tout autour selon la terre. [...] Et est encoires autant ou plus de ceste place, car il y a logis pour mettre v ou vi^M chevaux. Etma l’en dit que ceste ville et forteresse est tresbien garnie d’artillerie. Toutefois j’az veu dedans celle citadele que j’ay dit III bombardes de metal, dont les deux sont de deux pièces. Et l’une est la plus grosse que je veisse oncques et a XLII poulces de large dedans où la pierre entre, mais à mon advis, elle est bien courte selon sa grandeur. Item, je veys vi galées et v galiotes qui estoient là sur la riyvere de la Save.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 212-214.

⁵¹ “Coulumbach [...] m’a l’en dit qu’il est forte place, mais il se peut tresbien assiéger et battre de bombardes et d’autres engins et garder qu’il ne porroit avoir secours que à tres grant

The surprising report that Belgrade, controlled by King Sigismund of Hungary, is to be guarded by foreigners is in a way an allusion to the military valour of Burgundy. The Burgundian traveller was told that the garrison in Belgrade was made up of Germans, since, although "they had Serbians and Hungarians near at hand", the King of Hungary "could not trust" the Serbians because "they are subjects and tributaries to the Turk". Furthermore, as for the Hungarians, they "were so much afraid of" the Turk that "should he appear, they did not dare to defend" the castle, no matter how strong it was. That is why Sigismund was obliged to call in strangers.⁵²

The whole story seems very odd. La Broquière himself was surprised to discover that this vital frontier fortress was not entrusted to local people.⁵³ We do know that some German mercenaries – mainly Czechs – were in the armies of King Sigismund, but largely, in a greater number in the forces of János Hunyadi in the 1440s. It is also known that in 1429 Sigismund called in the Teutonic Order and commissioned them with the garrison of certain castles along the Lower Danube, e.g., the wardenship of Szörény [Turnu-Severin]; however, they did not receive the captaincy of Belgrade, since it was another wardenship, and in 1433 they left their positions; probably after the visit of the Burgundian knight.⁵⁴ In 1433, one would have been unlikely to find Germans in Belgrade, let alone the situation La Broquière is depicting, i.e. "instead of Serbians and Hungarians". It is not that there would not have been any Germans there, or some troops, if not ethnically German, then recruited from the Empire, including Czechs or Italians; however, it is without question that mainly Hungarians were employed.

desavantage. Et en ce chastel tient le Turc bien cent fustes pour passer en Honguerie quant bon luy samble, car nul ne luy résiste à l'encontre." *Le Voyage d'Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 215.

⁵² "[...] en garnison [...] et on me dist que c'estoient Alemans ; lors, je demanday pourquoy on faisoit venir les Alemans qui sont si loing et se on ne trouvoit point des gens de Honguerie ou de Servie pour garder ladite place. Il me fu dit au regart de ceulx de Servie, on ne les laisseroit point y entrer, pour ce qu'ilz sont subjectz obeissans et tributaires au Turc ; et les Hongres, les craignent et doubtent tant, que si le Turc venoit devant, ils n'oseroient garder ladite place contre luy à tout sa puissance pour ceste cause, on commet gens estrangiers à la garder, car l'empereur ne tient nulle autre place oultre la Dunoe pour passer ou se retraire, si mestier estoit." *Le Voyage d'Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 216.

⁵³ Michael Angold, "The Decline of Byzantium seen through the eyes of Western travellers", In: *Travel in the Byzantine World*, Papers from the Thirty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, April 2000, ed. Ruth Macrides, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003, p. 213-232, here p. 222.

⁵⁴ Paviot also accepts the statement that the defence of Belgrade was charged with Germans and does not question its authenticity: J. Paviot, *Les ducs de Bourgogne*, op. cit., p. 78.

One may think that there is some underlying truth that Serbs were not “welcome” in the garrison. In 1426-1427 when Belgrade and other Serbian castles were to be taken over by Hungary from the despot of Serbia, Štefan Lazarević, he broke the treaty with King Sigismund and did not surrender Golubac; that is, there was a conflict with the King of Hungary. That might be a reason why Sigismund did not rely on the original Serbian garrison forces, though we do not think this was the case. Sigismund needed to build on the Serbian and Southern Slav military elements. It is difficult to infer anything, however, from the report that the Hungarians feared to fight in the garrison. One possible reason for this report – though hypothetical – might be that Sigismund (or, as La Broquière did not meet the King himself while in Hungary, his government, the members of which the Burgundian did in fact meet with) had a hand in transferring this “false” information to the traveller and making him believe that the Hungarians suffer great hardships in garrisoning Belgrade. That might have been a real trump in the hand of Sigismund when requesting aid from Burgundy. The news that the gate of Christendom could not be protected because the Hungarians did not dare to fight the Ottomans might have had an effect on Duke Philip. This may have been part of a conscious attempt by Sigismund to appeal to the crusading fervour of Burgundy and request money.

La Broquière was most distrustful of the Greeks.⁵⁵ He seems to go out of his way to demonstrate how the Byzantines are double-dealing, unreliable and too irresponsible to lead the anti-Ottoman campaign, since they had on several occasions submitted themselves to the Turks. He relates a story of a Byzantine emperor who, when taken prisoner by the Turks and fearing for his own life, accepted the offer of his liberty from the Sultan, on condition that “the square in front of Hagia Sophia and two palaces” were to be demolished. In fact, it is a garbled story of Emperor John V Palaeologus, who in the early 1390s built two towers and started reconstruction work in the fortifications of the city, which was discovered by Bayezid I. The Sultan demanded that John raze these new works, threatening war and the blinding of his son Manuel, whom he held in captivity.⁵⁶ That the Byzantines could

⁵⁵ M. Angold, “The Decline of Byzantium”, art. cit., p. 222.

⁵⁶ “[...] ung Empereur les fist abatre pour ce qu’il se trouva en dangier et prisonnier du Grant Turc, lequel le volt contraindre de rendre la cité de Constantinoble ou de le faire mourir. Lequel Empereur respondi qu’il amoit mieulx mourir que faire ung si grant dommaige à la Crestienté et que sa mort ne seroit point si préjudiciable comme seroit la perte de Constantinoble, et ainsi eslut il la mort. Et quant le Turc vit cecy, il luy fist dire qu’il fist abatre les deux palais et la

not be relied on was yet another reason why the Prince should take on the enterprise himself.

In the same way, the division and animosity of the Balkan Slavs is another reason why Burgundy must assume the role of the leader of the *passagium*. The people of the Balkans, "it is a great regret", serve the Turks and dare not refuse.⁵⁷ The author gives a telling example of the division of Bosnia. A lord came to the Turkish court and "pretended that the crown of that country belonged to him, and came in consequence to do homage for it to the Turk, and ask succour from him against the present king".⁵⁸ This seems to have confirmed the worst fears that the Balkan Christians were lost to the Turks and no longer had the will to resist.⁵⁹ In a situation like this, the only hope was the aid of the West.

In addition, the King of Hungary, Sigismund, is treated very negatively, particularly vis-à-vis Philip the Good. There is a remarkable story when La Broquière finds a Milanese ambassador at the court of Sultan Murad II, commissioned by Sigismund to ask the Turk to surrender all his conquests "in Hungary, Wallachia, Bulgaria as far as Sophia, Bosnia, and a part of Slavonia".⁶⁰ It is in itself unrealistic and unbelievable: it sounds absurd that Sigismund in a very amateurish way would ask the Sultan to give up all the occupied territories! As the story continues, it rather turns out to be an exemplum, a moral lesson, having nothing to do with reality. The Sultan's answer is that this present request is unreasonable, he is unwilling to renounce what "he had won by the sword". The only reason why he had not already advanced his occupations and "he abstained from pushing his conquests further in

place qui est devant Sainte Sophie et il le delivreroit, pensant mais que les ditz palais feussent abbatus, que aisément après il conquestcroit ladite cité. L'Empereur l'accorda et ainsi le fist taire comme il appert encoires." *Le Voyage d'Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 151-152. On the story see M. Angold, "The Decline of Byzantium", art. cit., p. 223.

⁵⁷ "[...] lesquelz n'osent dire le contraire et sont plusieurs esclaves." *Le Voyage d'Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 185.

⁵⁸ "[...] on fist venir ung seigneur du royaume de Bossene, lequel estoit venu devers le Turc pour luy faire obéissance d'icelluy royaume et fu mené seoir en ladite galerie avecques les bâchas, lequel estoit venu pour demander secours audit seigneur contre le Roy de Bossene et se disoit que le royaume luy appartenoit." *Le Voyage d'Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 189.

⁵⁹ M. Angold, "The Decline of Byzantium", art. cit., p. 222.

⁶⁰ "Et me fu dit que la charge qu'il avoit estoit que son frère le duc de Milan luy prioit que pour amour de luy, il fust content de laisser à l'empereur de Romme Sigemond le royaume de Honguerie, la Walaquie et la Vulgairie jusques à Sophie et le royaume de Bossene et ce qu'il tenoit en Albanie qui depend d'Esclavonie." *Le Voyage d'Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 194-195.

Hungary, which he *might easily have done*”, is out of a personal regard for Sigismund, and he himself has thus made “a sacrifice” and saved Hungary so far, which should now “satisfy” the Hungarians.⁶¹ The author is masterful in proving that the Ottomans could have easily occupied Hungary had they so wanted. The only reason why the country is independent is the “sentiment” of the Sultan, and he, out of kindness, spared the lands of his “frater”, Sigismund. If this is true, the situation is critical, and the Turkish armies can conquer Hungary whenever their lord wishes; the Westerners are not to delay any longer, but must set out on their campaign right away. Sigismund and his country are no match for the Turk, since the Sultan himself says “hitherto he had never met the emperor’s forces without beating them, or putting them to flight as was well known to all the world”.⁶² The author reminds his audience – his Prince as well – how and in what way Sigismund lost his battles against the Ottomans at Nicopolis and Golubac.⁶³ There is only one solution: the Prince must lead the forces of Christendom.

Allusions to the Heroic Past and the Ancient World

A good way to appeal to the Prince was to attract him towards the ancient world, particularly Troy and Alexander the Great. Duke Philip had a number of Trojan histories in his library, of which some were made particularly for him (*Istoire de la destruction de Troye la Grant; Recueil des Histories de Troie*).⁶⁴ In the Balkans, La Broquière found the ancient city of “Ayne” (Ainos, Aenus, present-day Enez, Turkey), beyond “Ypsala”, on the sea-shore of Thrace, at the mouth of the river Maritsa/Marica. “When Troy flourished, this was a powerful city, and had a king.” The Burgundian traveller also

⁶¹ “[...] mais il luy sambloit que les requestes qu’il luy faisoit n’estoient point raisonnables, et devoit bien estre content de ce que, pour amour de luy, il avoit souvent différé de faire grans conquestes sur le royaume de Honguerie, qu’il eust bien fait s’il eust voulu, et luy devoit bien souffire et luy scroit bien dure chose de rendre ce qu’il avoit gaignié à l’espée.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 196

⁶² “[...] car à celle heure, ne luy, ne ses gens n’avoient point d’autre pays pour eulx occuper que les pays dudit empereur, lequel ne se trouva oncques devant luy, ne ses prédécesseurs, qu’ilz ne l’eussent tousiours desconfy et qu’il ne s’en fust fuy, comme chascun le peut bien sçavoir et n’eut point d’autre responce.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 198.

⁶³ “[Coulonbach]... et me contèrent comment l’empereur et son ost avoient passé la Dunoe en ses galées.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 198.

⁶⁴ Miriam Cheyns-Condé, “L’épopée troyenne dans la «bibliothèque» ducal bourguignonne au x^v^e siècle”, In: *À la cour de Bourgogne. Le duc, son entourage, son train*, éd. Jean-Marie Cauchies, Turnhout, Brepols, 1998, p. 87.

found, "on a circular hillock", the tomb of Polydore/Polydorus, the youngest of the sons of Priam and Hecuba. He goes on to tell the story of Homer's *Iliad* in its entirety, and a part of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Priam sent his son, during the siege of Troy, to the king of Aenus with much treasure; but after the destruction of Troy, the king – though his name, Polymestor, is not known to La Broquière – as much due to fear of the Greeks as the wish to possess this treasure, put the young prince to death.⁶⁵ It is conspicuous that La Broquière does not mention the end of Virgil's story, though he could have benefitted much from it; thus we are left to infer that Polydorus' fate was so well-known in the court of Burgundy that the author did not find it important to go into details of Aeneas's continuation. That is, Aeneas, setting out from the besieged Troy, lands in Thrace. The land is overgrown with various plants, and as Aeneas begins to uproot them, they begin to sprout blood. The plants begin to speak and explain that they are Polydorus – the spears that were used to kill him stuck into the ground and took root, transforming into plants. The story might have been used by the Burgundian crusader ideology – side by side with that of the Argonauts and the Golden Fleece – as Polydorus' blood being a kind of 'water of eternal life', and he himself might have been idealized as a youthful, innocent prince who cannot be destroyed by evil designs. His blood is immortal, with which the Burgundians could fight against the Heathen. The Prince could have the mystery of eternal life – following a Holy Grail analogy – with which he would be the sole Christian ruler who could overwhelm the Ottomans and drive them out of Europe. I find that La Broquière's setting is conscious and he deliberately calls the Prince's attention to the city of Aenus, which, through its recapture during a campaign could allow him to obtain an invincible weapon.

A parallel allusion is drawn to Alexander the Great. La Broquière reports that he was in Philippopolis, and saw the palace of Alexander's father, but indicates that "it was formerly a considerable town, and indeed is so now". That is, on the first level of interpretation, in a scheme of a *passagium generale*, it might be used in practice, in war, as a fortress and logistics depot, or a relocation

⁶⁵ "Item, de cy je alay à une ville que l'en nomme Ayne qui fu jadis une grant cité du temps de Troye la grant et y souloit avoir ung roy et maintenant en est seigneur le frère du seigneur de Matelin, lequel est tributaire au Turc. Item, il y a une sépulture qui est sur une petite montaigne reonde et dient que jadis le Roy Priam envoya ung sien filz moinsné qu'on appelloit Polidoire avec grant foison de trésor à ce roy de Ayne, lequel, aprez la destruction de Troye, tant pour crainte des Grecz que pour la convoitise du trésor, l'avoit faict morir." *Le Voyage d'Outremere*, ed. cit., p. 173-174.

base on the routes towards Adrianopolis or even Constantinople. On the second level, its ideological value might also be beneficial: the palace, “which has been demolished, but the walls still remain” has a “secondary” value beyond the actual strategic importance. In other words, the one who controls Alexander’s palace has an extraordinary position amongst the rulers of the earth. The Prince could emerge as a “new Alexander”, and revive the glory of the conqueror of the ancient world.⁶⁶

An analogous exhortation towards the Duke is to be found with Emperor Constantine the Great. La Broquière reports of a “high square column, with characters traced on it, and bearing on the summit an equestrian statue of Constantine in bronze”. In fact, it is the statue of Justinian, though the author is unaware of it, or deliberately does not question at all the trustworthiness of his information, since he is aiming to inspire the Duke of Burgundy just with the figure of Constantine. The Emperor’s statue “holds a sceptre in his left hand, with his right extended towards Turkey in Asia, and the road to Jerusalem”. It is an undoubtable sign that the author intends to connect the spiritual role of the Emperor to his Prince, and portray him as a “new Constantine”, with a designated position to lead the armies of Christendom to the Holy Land. As the “whole of that country was under his government”, the “new” Constantine should be the one to take control over the lands of Christ again. It is again a conspicuous hint that “near this column are three others, placed in a line, and of one single piece, bearing three gilt horses, now at Venice”.⁶⁷ That is, as the Venetian Republic got hold of the horses of the Hippodrome, or the Triumphal Quadriga, during the Fourth Crusade, and had them installed on the terrace of the façade of St. Mark’s Basilica, Burgundy might just as well get the treasure of the sceptre pointing towards

⁶⁶ “[...] je arrivay à Philipopolis qui est le chief de Macédoine [...] Ce fu jadis une bien grant ville et est encoires... Et au bout, vers le midi, estoit la maison dudit roy ainsi qu’il me fu monstre, car les murs y sont encoires, car il a esté tout rué jus et le grand chastel aussi et si a deux autres montaignes ung pou plus grant que celle là où estoit ledit chastel.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 200.

⁶⁷ “Et en alant de l’autre costé devers le ponant, il y a ung moult hault pillier de pierres quarrées où il y a des lettres escriptes, lequel est bien hault et dessus est Constantin l’Empereur, de metal sur ung grand cheval tout de fondure et tient le sceptre en l’enchlenche main et a le bras droit tendu et la main ouverte devers la Turquie et le chemin de Jherusalem par terre, en signe que tout celluy pays jusques en Jherusalem luy souloit estre obeyssant, et ne sçay point en quelle manière on l’a peu mettre là dessus, veu la grandeur et le poix de quoy il est. Et assés près dudit pillier en a III autres d’un renc chascun d’une pierre sur lesquels souloit avoir trois chevaux dorez lesquelz sont maintenant à Venize.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 159-160.

the Holy Land, or even the whole statue of Constantine, which would by all means legitimize Duke Philip as the sole champion of Christ.

Relics

Relics of the Holy Land are the most influential means to appeal to the Duke's vanity. Despite being well-hidden amidst the descriptions of pilgrimage places, it can be discerned that the author emphasizes them, bringing forth minutely portrayed relics, some obscure and seemingly long-forgotten, vaguely implying the discovery of these might be an utterly unique glory for the whole House of Burgundy. While it is not explicitly stated, reading between the lines it seems La Broquière is trying to induce his Prince to get hold of these relics and become their guardian. The author has recourse to the Duke to take up arms and save the invaluable mementoes of the Christian religion hard-pressed by Heathen. La Broquière relates the situations of certain relics and churches in the hands of Muslims. It would not be a great effort to "grab" these relics and bring them "home", to Burgundy. In a way, as a Christian ruler, the Duke could become "equal" in rank to the King of France, who had got hold of the True Cross and the Crown of Thorns in the Sainte-Chapelle, or the King of England, who had possession of a stone said to bear the marks of Christ's feet from his Ascension and a relic of the girdle of the Virgin Mary in Westminster Abbey.

Duke Philip could "easily" achieve eternal fame by saving a church near Damascus, which "was now converted into a mosque".⁶⁸ Located between Damascus' Eastern Gate and a village named Kaukab, it was where St. Paul was said to have had a vision and been converted. The author implies this shrine has been blasphemed, and that the Burgundians would be able get it "home", even stone by stone, and have it re-erected in his duchy. Concerning the admiration of Saint George, an even more unrivalled achievement would be to get hold of the "stone", also near Damascus, "from which St George mounted his horse when he went to combat the dragon". The Voyage reports that it is "two feet square", and again, it is an obvious invocation to the Prince's ambitions that "when the Saracens attempted to carry it away, they could not succeed". In other words, the floor is open to the crusaders, and the Duke

⁶⁸ "Et auprez de ceste ville de Damas, me fu monstrée la place où saint Pol trouva Nostre Seigneur et où il cheut de son cheval et perdy la veue, comme l'en dist, et le fist retourner en la ville soy baptysier en ung lieu où maintenant a une musquée..." *Le Voyage d'Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 34. See Otto F. A. Meinardus, "The Site of Paul's Conversion at Kaukab", *Biblical Archaeologist*, 44, 1981, p. 57-59.

could be the first Christian prince to be able to carry it, an obvious analogy to King Arthur and the Excalibur.⁶⁹

It was also worth ascertaining whether it intrigues the Duke that, near the Church of St. Barbara, Jews found an image of our Lord and “began to stone it, as their fathers had in times past stoned the original”, but “the image shed blood”.⁷⁰ Some find that La Broquière here also proves to be gullible with respect to this kind of myth, and does not question its validity.⁷¹ We do not know whether he knew that Jews *allegedly* stoned the image of Christ and it *allegedly* began to bleed, or if he trusted the story entirely – anyway, he was not a cleric but a layman – but he no doubt made use of it in his scheme of invocation: the blood-shedding image of Jesus Christ at St. Barbara – regardless of whether it did in fact bleed or not – could also elevate the dignity of the House of Burgundy.

An even more miraculous relic La Broquière was to find was the image of “Our Lady of Serdenay” (Sardan, Sardenal, Notre-Dame-à-la-Roche, the Convent of Our Lady of Sidnaya, Saidnaya or Seydnaya, present-day Syria, north of Damascus), “a portrait of the Virgin painted on wood”, which “gives an oily sweat”. It is the Icon of the All-Holy Virgin, the Theotokos; the traveller himself became convinced “it always sweats”, and he might have proposed that this much-adored place of pilgrimage was also to be saved.⁷² The Holy Icon was visited by pilgrims seeking the Virgin Mary’s blessings as it was believed to grant (or at least intercede for) healing and fertility miracles, and the holy oil emitted from the breasts of the Virgin Mary was believed to be a miraculous oil that could heal the sick. I would not say that in the 15th century the shrine sank into oblivion, as it was reported to be admired by Muslims as well – as the icon ‘El Chagoura’ – but since the Christians had left the Holy Land it had

⁶⁹ “[...] et veys la place où saint George monta à cheval quant il ala combattre le dragon. Et illec a une pierre de deux piez en quarrure où il monta à cheval. Aucuns dient que les Sarazins l’ont plusieurs fois voulu oster, mais ilz n’ont peu en nulle manière que ce soit.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 34.

⁷⁰ “Item, y eut ung aultre miracle d’un imaige de Nostre Seigneur qui estoit en la maison d’un Juif...; et fu révélé par les Juifz qui lapidèrent ledit imaige ainsy qu’ilz avoient voulu faire Nostre Seigneur. Et quant ilz le veirent saignier, ilz en furent tous esbahis.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 40.

⁷¹ A. Classen, “The Diplomat Pilgrim Bertrandon de la Broquière”, In: *op. cit.*, p. 52.

⁷² “Nostre Dame de Serdenay [...] Et a là ung petit chastel sur une roche où il y a une église de Gallogrecz en laquelle a une ymaige de Nostre Dame painte, ce dit on, en une table de bois... et dist on qu’elle sue toudis et que celle sueur est uyle. [...] Et aubout de ceste table, y a ung petit vaisseau où il y a de l’uyle.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 64-65.

lost much of its significance. La Broquière was looking to have the Duke of Burgundy revive the commemoration of the icon and restore its rightful role.

The scheme of rendering aid to the "City guarded by Angels" was obviously the great cause for which La Broquière was sent out for his inland journey. He was to explore the situation of Constantinople falling at the claws of Evil. (A manuscript folio of *Le Voyage d'Outremer*, illuminated after the loss of the city, shows an image of the siege.⁷³) If the Duke was to lead a victorious campaign to re-capture Byzantium, he would receive great and valuable gifts, which would then without doubt embellish the honour of his house. In the Hagia Sophia, for example, he had a look at "one of the robes of our Lord", "the end of the lance that pierced his side", "the sponge that was offered him to drink from, and the reed that was put into his hand". The Holy Sponge, set on a reed, is one of the Instruments of the Passion of Jesus Christ. It was dipped in vinegar, or in sour wine, and offered to Christ to drink during the Crucifixion. The Holy Reed was also discovered by Empress Helena, and brought to the Constantine Basilica first. As for the lance, it is the so-called larger part of it, presently in Rome. The point of the lance, which had broken off, had originally been held in Jerusalem, but after the 7th century Persian invasion was taken to Constantinople and placed in the Hagia Sophia, then in the Church of the Virgin of the Pharos. The point, set in an icon, was then acquired by the Latin Emperor Baldwin II and sold to King Louis IX of France, who enshrined it with the Crown of Thorns in the Sainte-Chapelle. For the Burgundians to get hold of the larger part of the Holy Lance, which was still held at that time in Constantinople, might have been a victory in their rivalry with the Valois.⁷⁴ The traveller was also shown "the gridiron on which St. Laurence was broiled",⁷⁵ and "a large stone, in the shape of a wash-stand", on which "Abraham gave the angels to eat, when they were going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah".⁷⁶

⁷³ Constantinople 1453: BnF Français 9087, fol. 207v.

⁷⁴ Finally, in 1492 Sultan Bayezid II sent the larger part to Pope Innocent VIII.

⁷⁵ The gridiron of the martyrdom was placed by Pope Paschal II in the church of San Lorenzo in Lucina in the early 12th century, so this could be another "duplicate" of relics, of which many were to be found in Constantinople.

⁷⁶ "Et dist on que, en ceste église, est une des robes de Nostre Seigneur et le fer de la lance et l'esponge dont il fu abreuvé et le rosol marin. Mais je y ay veu derrière le cuer les grandes bendes de fer du gril sur quoy saint Laurent fu rosti. Et je y ay veu une pierre large comme ung lavoir où on dist que Abraham donnai mengier aux trois angels qui aloient pour destruire Sodome et Gomorre." *Le Voyage d'Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 154, M. Barsi, "Constantinople à la cour de Philippe de Bon", art. cit., p. 141.

In the church of the Pantocrator, the Burgundian nobleman was shown “a stone or table of diverse colours, which Nicodemus had caused to be cut to be placed on his tomb”, and which he made use of “to lay out the body of our Lord, when he took him down from the cross”. (In fact the *Gospel of Nicodemus* [*Acta Pilati* or *Evangelium Nicodemi*] does not state explicitly what Christ’s body was laid out on.) La Broquière then goes into detail how “during this operation, the Virgin was weeping over the body”, but “her tears, instead of remaining on it, fell on the stone”. (It is known from 12th century Byzantine sources that the Pantocrator held the slate upon which the body of Christ was laid after the deposition from the Cross to be washed and embalmed, which also bore the traces of the tears of the Virgin.⁷⁷) He emphasizes that “the tears are all now to be seen upon it” – and indicates to his would-be reader, first of all the Duke, that these are what needed to be kept safe and Burgundy could house them. It appears that after being initially sceptical, La Broquière was persuaded of its authenticity, when requested to examine the precious relic closely: “I at first took them for drops of wax, and touched them with my hand, and then bended down to look at them horizontally, and against the light, when they seemed to me like drops of congealed water.”⁷⁸ The tears seemed real and were worth safe-guarding.

Seen from another perspective, that is, from La Broquière’s distrust of the Byzantines, it seems that they cannot be trusted as the guardians of holy shrines and relics.⁷⁹ The Burgundian sees clearly the weaknesses of the imperial regime. As the present Byzantine emperor is very much under the control of the Turk,⁸⁰ the relics alone are worth fighting for, but the Byzantines do not even deserve to house them in their city, the security of which must now be entrusted to a more reliable prince.

⁷⁷ Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses. Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 183; *The Pantokrator Monastery in Constantinople*, ed. Sofia Kotzabassi, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2013, p. 101; Jonathan Harris, *Constantinople: Capital of Byzantium*, London, Bloomsbury, 2009, p. 16.

⁷⁸ “En ceste église est la lame ou pierre que Nichodeme avait faicte pour mettre sur son monument, sur laquelle pierre de diverses couleurs Jhesucrist fut mis, quant on le descendit de l’arbre de la croix et que Nostre Dame le mist sur son giron. Et est une moult dévotte chose, comme il me samble, car on y voit toutes les larmes que Nostre Dame ploura, qui cheoient sur ladite pierre et non mie sur le corps de Jhesucrist. Et véritablement, je cuiday de prime face que ce fussent gouttes de cire et y mis la main pour les touchier et puis me abaissay bas pour veoir contre le jour et me sembla que c’estoient gouttes d’eau engelées.” *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 160-161.

⁷⁹ M. Angold, “The Decline of Byzantium”, art. cit., p. 223-224.

⁸⁰ “L’Empereur de Constantinoble est en grande subjection du Grant Turc”: *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, ed. cit., p. 164.

I imagine, based on the text of *Le Voyage d'Outremer* and the reasons given why La Broquière wished to take an overland route back home, that he was seeking justification for the Duke to enter into an enterprise of Christ. Beyond the real causes, the actual threats the Ottomans posed to Christianity, he was to resort to the Duke's crusading aspirations with the "side-effects" of his "pilgrimage": relics and ancient heroes in order to rouse chivalrous eagerness. The work is a piece of appellation to Christian worthiness and chivalrous appraisal. The *Voyage* served very well in this regard: it became a part of the works connected to the crusading propaganda embodied in the *Vœu de Faisan*, closely tied to those treating the legend of Jason and the Golden Fleece.⁸¹

⁸¹ J. Vanderjagt, "La Broquière", art. cit., p. 326; M. Barsi, "Constantinople à la cour de Philippe de Bon", art. cit., p. 136. See Christan de Merindol, "Le Banquet du Faisan. Jérusalem et l'esprit de croisade hors de la Bourgogne à la veille de la prise de Constantinople", In: *Le banquet du faisan*, op. cit., p. 71-83.